

Art Unit 2627
Serial No.: 10/816,536

Reply to Office Action of: 09/06/2006
Attorney Docket No.: A1498

REMARKS

Claims 3-4 and non-elected claims 12-15 are hereby canceled in the interest of advancing the case towards allowance. Claims 1-2, and 5-11 remain pending.

In the September 6, 2006 Office Action, claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for alleged indefiniteness of the claim recitation "parallel to the axis of rotation." These claim rejections have now been mooted by the present amendments to claims 1, 10, and 11 which entirely remove the allegedly indefinite language. Therefore, the applicants respectfully request that the claim rejections under U.S.C. §112 be withdrawn.

In the September 6, 2006 Office Action, claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent 5,953,183 to Butler et al (hereinafter "Butler"). However, Butler can not anticipate the amended pending claims at least because Butler fails to disclose or suggest that the main body section, the actuator arm, and the flex cable guiding support have the same thickness (as presently required by all of the pending claims). Rather, Butler discloses a head stack assembly where the main body section, the actuator arm, and the flex cable guiding support have different thicknesses. For at least this reason, the applicants respectfully request that the claim rejections over Butler under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) be withdrawn.

Moreover, Butler fails to disclose or suggest that the flex cable guiding support includes a bent region adjacent the horizontal plane, as additionally required by amended dependent claim 6. As amended, this limitation of dependent claim 6 is no longer a process or method limitation that can be ignored; it is now a structural limitation and it must be considered. For at least this additional reason, the applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 6 over Butler under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) be withdrawn.

In the September 6, 2006 Office Action, claims 1 and 7-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent 5,680,277 to Bonn et al (hereinafter "Bonn"). However, Bonn can not anticipate the amended pending claims at least because Bonn fails to disclose or suggest that the main body section, the actuator

Art Unit 2627
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arm, and the flex cable guiding support are a single component having material continuity rather than being an assembly of sub-components (as presently required by all of the pending claims). Rather, Bonn discloses a separate alignment bracket component that is assembled with, but not materially continuous with, a conventional actuator arm component. For at least this reason, the applicants respectfully request that the claim rejections over Bonn under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) be withdrawn.

In the September 6, 2006 Office Action, claims 2 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Butler or Bonn. Although neither Butler nor Bonn disclosed an actuator arm comprising sheet metal material, the examiner took official notice that it is "common" to use sheet metal material for actuator arms. The Applicants respectfully but vigorously disagree. On the contrary, what is common is the careful design of actuator arms using varying thicknesses to meet demanding stiffness and resonance specifications. It is by no means obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that an actuator arm having the same thickness as the main body and the flex cable guiding support could be made to work in a real disk drive, and it is no coincidence that the Butler and Bonn references both depict changes in thickness between these components or regions. The choice of thickness for these different components and regions is typically driven by different and distinct considerations. For example, the constraints on actuator arm thickness include disk-to-disk spacing, arm inertia, and windage considerations, whereas the main body thickness is rather driven by the number of disks in the disk drive. The flex cable guiding support thickness is typically chosen to accommodate the desired shape and stress on the flex cable. There is no simply no basis whatsoever upon which to take official notice that all of these different and distinct considerations and constraints could be simultaneously met by a single thickness of sheet metal in the field of disk drives. On the contrary, varying thickness structures are the norm in this area of endeavor, and the presently claimed invention is not obvious. For at least these reasons, applicants respectfully request that the claim rejections over Butler or Bonn under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are now in condition for allowance and request withdraw of the

Art Unit 2627
Serial No.: 10/816,536

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Attorney Docket No.: A1498

rejections. If it is believed that a telephone conversation would expedite the prosecution of the present application, or clarify matters with regard to its allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of any required fees associated with this Communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1209.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: November 1st, 2006

By: 

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